

DIVINES TO MEET

The National Assemblies of Presbyterians and Methodists.

Reformed Episcopalians in Council—The Unitarians Will Deliberate at the Same Time in Harmony with the Others.

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Rarely do matters purely religious assume the interdenominational importance of the present preparations for the coming congresses of the four great denominations, namely: The Presbyterian general assembly, the general council of the Reformed Episcopal church, the Methodist general conference, and the representative conference of the American Unitarian association. The members of these great religious bodies are now deciding upon the membership of the coming assemblies, which, for the first time in many years, will represent a practically simultaneous coming together of divided flocks in the same general spirit.

The Presbyterian general assembly, which is being chosen now, although its sessions do not open until some weeks have elapsed, and the convening place of which is Saratoga Springs, seems to be attracting more attention than any of the others. It may be necessary to explain here that the question of revision of the confession of faith still forms the dividing line

will make more effective efforts than ever to meet general religious needs by contributing to the support and maintenance of ministers and congregations now overburdened from lack of pecuniary resources.

Of Maryland, will have a considerable representation.

Efforts will be made to collate the history of the movement, for even today there is much misunderstanding as to the significance of Reformed Episcopalianism and the nature and purpose of its ceremonies and creed. Church discipline and the coordinate jurisdiction of the bishops will be considered, and there is a movement looking to the increase of the church buildings in all the metropolitan centers. The gathering will be unusual among American religious assemblies, in view of its Canadian representation. Since the appointment of Bishop Thomas W. Campbell, of Toronto, the dominion church has thrived until its communicants now include Canadians of wealth and influence, and the bishop predicts the most impressive assemblage in the history of the movement when the delegates assemble at Chicago.

That powerful denomination, the Methodist Episcopal church, south, will convene in general conference at Memphis, Tenn., in May, the same month selected by the three other religious bodies above noted. The Methodist church, south, is a name apt to mislead all who are not Methodists, for its work is as important in Methodism as is that of any other as

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castor.
When she was a Child, she cried for Castor.
When she became Miss, she clung to Castor.
When she had Children, she gave them Castor.

A Funny Superstition.

There are people who have a distinct antipathy to the screech owl and cannot listen to a single burst of its hilarity without shuddering. The screech owl is supposed by the negroes on southern plantations to be in direct communication with all the "ghosts" and "giants" of the forests. He plays a great part in the more weird folklore story of the darky. A funny superstition in regard to the screech owl is that if you will take your shoe or slipper off your left foot the first time you hear an owl laugh and turn the shoe sole upward on the floor and place your "stocking foot" on the bottom of the shoe's sole the owl will stop laughing and fly for ten miles without rest.

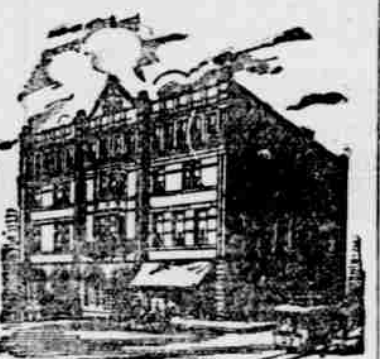
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PROMINENT DELEGATES.

Nashville, Bishop E. R. Hendrix, of Kansas City, Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson, of Baltimore, Bishop R. K. Har- grove, of Nashville, and Bishop Dan- can, of South Carolina, being the ones who will be in authority.

The matters requiring most consid- eration, in the opinion of the delegates already chosen, will be church exten- sion, mission work in undeveloped fields, and the more liberal endow- ment of homes. This is in itself a sufficient indication of how free from internal dissensions the church is, and of the steady prog- ress it has made in its territory. There is a project for effective work in the interest of seamen along the Gulf states, and the condition of the semi- naries will be improved financially, also, as the resources of the churches have greatly increased during the twelve months last past. Indeed, the Methodist church, south, is a religious phenomenon in this respect, and that revival all over the country which some have ascribed to the hard times has not been without its good influ- ence on this denomination. But Bishop T. S. Key, of Sherman, Tex., has ex- pressed some misgivings as to the per- manence of any spasmodic religious outburst, and hence it comes that there will be such great attention to church extension.

The duration of the conference will be prolonged, but its adjournment will certainly close an epoch in the history of the church. It is one of the wealth- est sects now in the south, although its vested interests have never been phenomenal pecuniarily.

These three religious denominations will hardly have assembled before the meeting of the Unitarians will bring adherents of that propaganda together from all parts of the country. It is significant that this should be the case, for the American Unitarian association will consider the deliberations of all the other bodies, subjectively, at least. Its first topic, for instance, will be the best means of effecting union, sympathy and cooperation among all the liberal Christian sects, which will have direct bearing upon the work of the Presbyter- ians, the reformed Episcopalians and the Methodists. President George S. Hale has direct supervision of another matter that will be considered: "To publish and distribute books and tracts, inculcating correct views of religion in such form and at such times as shall afford all an opportunity of becoming ac- quainted with Christian truth." Another aim of the coming meeting will be the sending out of Christian mission- aries, especially in such parts of the country as are destitute of a stated ministry, and, according to the com- mittee of organization, there exist an alarmingly large number of districts so destitute. Hon. George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts, is one of the most con- spicuous of the Unitarians who will take part in the proceedings, and other noted Unitarians will include Rev. Grinnell Reynolds, Hon. Dorman B. Eaton, Hon. John D. Long, Hon. Charles H. Bell and Arthur Lincoln. While Unitarianism is especially strong in New England, the conference will represent all parts of the country, and

semblage to the denomination. Of course its representation will be ex- clusively southern, such churchmen as Bishop John C. Keener, of New Or- leans, Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald, of for the case of Prof. Briggs is now looked upon as a back number, he being himself in the position of a suspended minister ever since the formal action which proclaimed that he held "erroneous teachings, views and doctrines" which "strike at the vitals of religion." In the matter of revision, it seems likely that the Philadelphia contingent of commis- sioners, seconded by such eminent churchmen as Dr. Charles A. Dickey, Rev. W. H. Roberts, and particularly Rev. Henry C. McCook, will endeavor to secure action somewhat similar to that of the last gathering of the de- nomination, when practically nothing was done in the way of that drastic revision, which the radicals had been striving for. The Philadelphians seem to wish more activity in the way of spreading the faith than in revising it. The western Presbyterians are more for change, as seems indicated by the choices of commissioners so far re- ported. Dr. Robert P. Farris, of St. Louis, is considered a high authority in the ecclesiastical aspect of over- tures, but he is declared to be neutral on the majority of them, where he is not opposed. The southern men will be very strong in this assembly, which is why it is believed that the foreign missions will take precedence of the postponed ques- tion of revision. Dr. S. H. Chester, with Dr. J. N. Craig, of Atlanta, Dr. J. K. Hazen, of Richmond, and Dr. E. M. Richardson, of Richmond, will have more influence, individually, with the commissioners than any other south- ern quartette, probably, and as they have given their attention more to ed- ucational and mission matters than to revision, it is inferred that the hun- dred and more commissioners will not be disposed to act radically on the con- fession of faith. The session is ex- pected to be prolonged to an unusual length.

During the deliberations of the Presbyterians there will assemble at Chicago the general council of the Re- formed Episcopal church, a denomina- tion which has attained phenomenal proportions numerically since the con- vening of the first council, fourteen years ago. Bishop William R. Nichol- son of the Philadelphia and New York synods, will be the dominant personality, and the representatives of the denomination will consider prin- cipally the subject of church exten- sion. The trustees of the theological seminaries will be able to present an unusually favorable report this year, and Bishop Charles Edward Cheney, of Chicago, is understood to have a plan for an extension of mission work throughout the country. The trouble with Reformed Episcopalianism has been a lack of funds heretofore, but in view of the rapid advance in numbers that embourgeoisement has been to a great extent removed. The Philadelphia syn- odary has grown to national emine- nce the choice of Rev. John Mc- Dowell Leavitt as dean, and the men who have won eminence in its faculty include Prof. Max Muller, who is no relation to the German philologist and philosopher, Rev. J. Howard Smith and Rev. H. S. Hoffman. Philadelphia is the place which will make the best showing at Chicago, perhaps, but the south, with Bait, P. F. Stevens, of South Carolina, and James A. Latta,

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